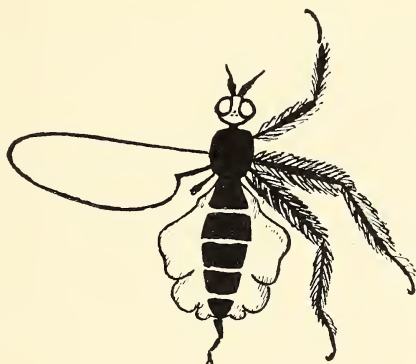


1940. The hornets and yellow-jackets (Vespinae) of West Virginia. *Proc. West Virginia Ac. Sci.*, XIII, (1939), pp. 33-36.

A CURIOUS HABIT OF AN EMPIDID FLY.

BY GEORGE STEYSKAL, Detroit, Mich.

Groups of females of *Rhamphomyia fumosa* Loew were seen at dusk hovering in my garden a few inches above the ground with their abdomens inflated to several times normal size (4.5 mm. wide). The tergites were well separated and the pleural membrane was widely protruded as in the accompanying sketch. The lateral protrusions are covered with short black pile. The abdomen collapses on being punctured and apparently contains nothing but cells of air.



The flies were seen swarming on June 29, 1939, and on most evenings from June 14 until July 14, 1940. By July 23, 1940, no *fumosa* could be found. On June 14 a single sweep of the net gathered ten females and a few minutes later an estimated twenty were again hovering in the same spot. No males were seen in the immediate vicinity of the swarm, but a single male was swept from vegetation about a hundred feet away.

The locality is a beech-maple woods close to the River Rouge and the favorite swarming spot is next a clump of maidenhair fern, *Adiantum pedatum*.

Females of *fumosa* were also taken in Detroit in random collecting on June 24, 1935, and June 10, 1939, and males on June 6, 10, and 11, 1939. A pair was taken in Ann Arbor, Mich., on June 7, 1936.